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SPECIAL EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

# CITY ART MUSEUM OF ST. LOUIS

## A COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY GERMAN GRAPHIC ART

OPENING APRIL 9, 1913

Series 1913; No. 8 10 Cents

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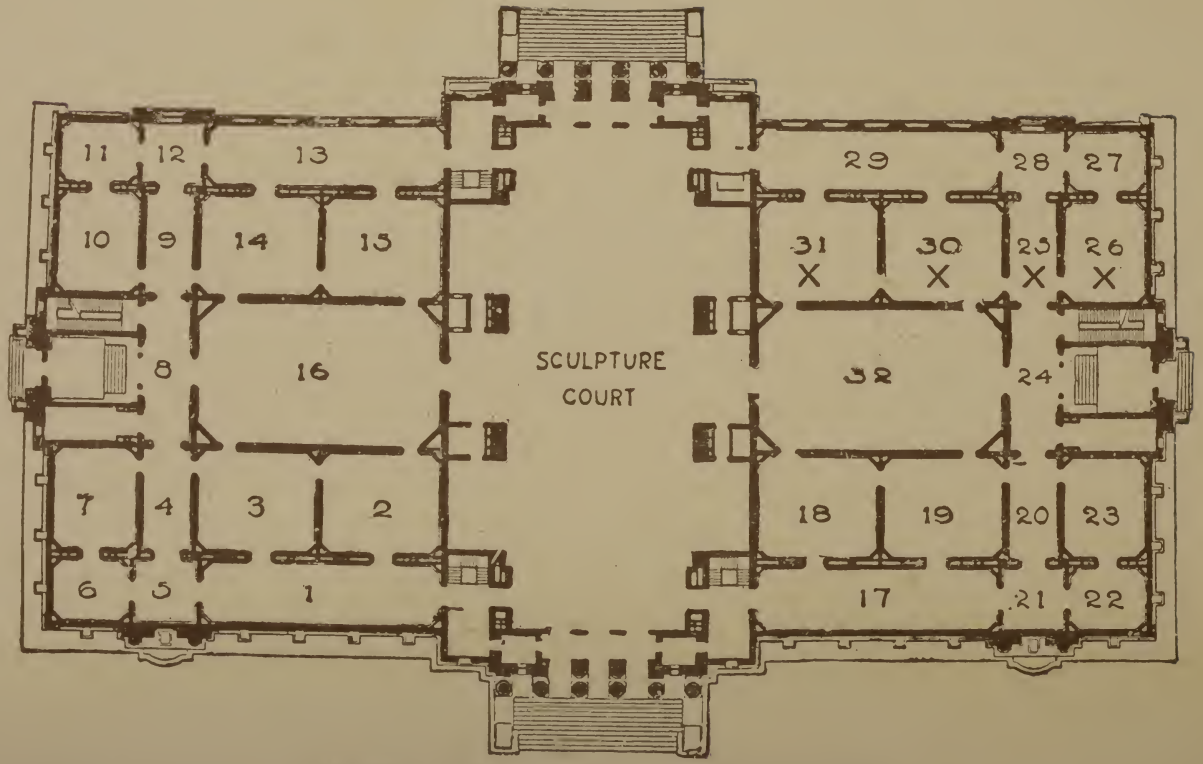


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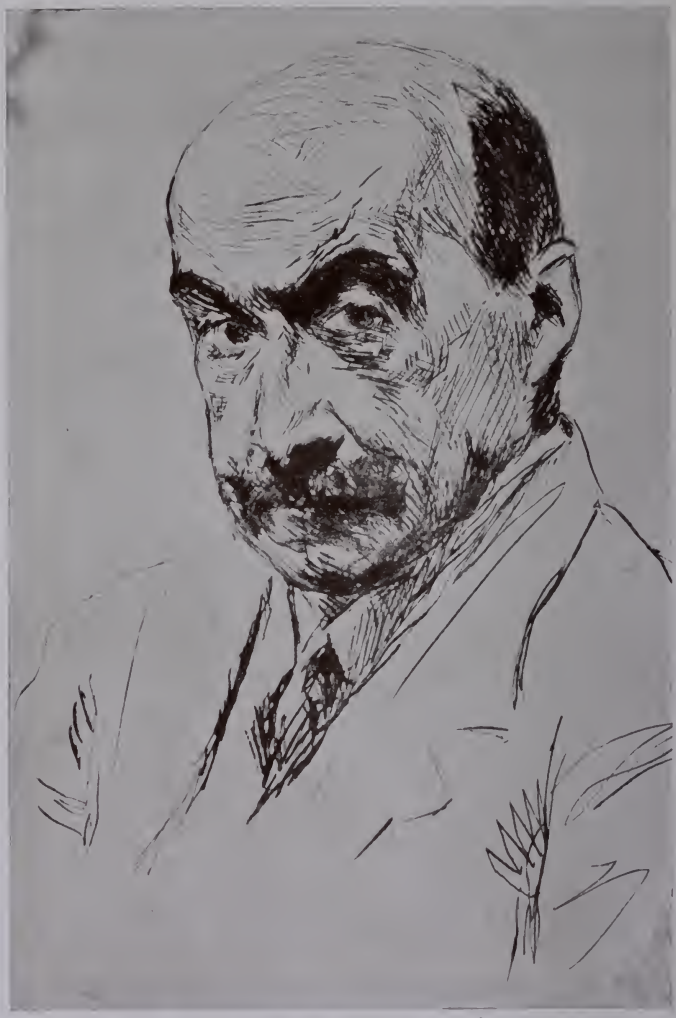

MAX LIEBERMANN

SELF-PORTRAIT

SPECIAL EXHIBITION CATALOGUE. Series 1913; No. 8

# THE CITY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS

## AN EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY GERMAN GRAPHIC ART

With an Introduction
By MARTIN BIRNBAUM

OPENING, APRIL 9, 1913, IN GALLERIES
25, 26, 30 AND 31 IN THE WEST WING

1874 1913

# THE CITY ART MUSEUM, ST. LOUIS

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# CONTEMPORARY GERMAN GRAPHIC ART

## INTRODUCTION BY MARTIN BIRNBAUM

AN exhibition of drawings, lithographs, etchings, and woodcuts by German artists ought naturally to prove far more stimulating than one made up of paintings, for even if we go back as far as Dürer we will be forced to admit that his paintings are not as refreshing or impressive as his graphic works, and the same is true of practically all the great German masters, with the possible exception of Menzel and Leibl. Germany's artistic genius has always been distinctly graphic, and while it is impossible to survey the whole existing field at all exhaustively within the limits of a short essay, one can without delay commence with the names of the three great living leaders, Max Klinger, Hans Thoma, and Max Liebermann, who tower above their compatriots.

The first of these shook off the fetters of authority and pedantry, carried on the traditions of the early German master-etchers and engravers, and saved the Graphic Arts of his country from the slough of despond into which it threatened to fall. Klinger is not unacademic, his technique is at times labored and old-fashioned in a good sense, but he revived and stimulated interest through the sensational nature of his works, which cover a vast range of subjects. When, in 1878, he first exhibited at the Academy in Berlin he was voted insane, but to-day his amazing cycles of etchings are accepted as immense dramas or epic poems. Had he written blank verse, he would have been an important literary figure. He inherited a solemn, antique grandeur mixed with modern romanticism from Böcklin, and varied influences of the Greeks, Dürer and Rops, are traceable in his work. A grotesque element which never becomes ridiculous, is reminiscent of Goya, and although it would be futile to compare his philosophic works with the wild Spaniard's, the influence of the Caprichos cannot be ignored. The extent of Klinger's work is colossal,—almost unbelievable,—and yet his attention to minute detail hurts the general effect. His graphic work and paintings have this in common, that the decorative borders and

ornamental frames are frequently more interesting than the pictures they bound, and his delight in using colored marble and metal for his plastic work detracts from a harmonious imposing effect. Everything he does, however, is intellectually and æsthetically stimulating, and if he is at times too profound and psychological, too much the visionary, his many-sided art must nevertheless be recognized as the inspirer of a throng of brilliant, eager men.

Franz von Stuck, an allied nature, is also indebted to Böcklin, but he has shown only the slightest interest in Graphic Art, whereas Klinger's most personal expressions are not his paintings or statuary but his etchings. The technique and cerebral quality in these appeal to such men as Otto Greiner and Erich Wolfsfeld, whose gigantic plates are among the artistic sensations of the present day. Among others of this group, Fritz Hegenbart is musical and whimsical, while Amandus Faure, Paul Burck, Walter Rehn, and Josef Uhl are fantastically inventive. The last-mentioned is a New Yorker by birth, who is still in the transitional stage, but he has already executed some fine portraits in the manner of the distinguished and lamented Stauffer-Bern. Occasionally these men are attracted only by the bizarre in Klinger's work. This is a regrettable tendency, for it may degenerate into morbidity and an abnormal conception of life. Horrible situations often please them, they lack repose and cultivate eccentricity, so that the only consoling thought which comes to mind is the recollection of Delacroix's epigram, "Donnez moi de la boue, je vous ferai des chefs d'œuvres." Perhaps they are even now at work on masterpieces. It is a relief to turn from such examples of their work to the lithographs of Ludwig von Hofmann, another pagan, who is the happy interpreter of eternal youth and beauty. His delicate dancing nymphs and fauns, so charmingly described by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, exert an universal appeal. Exquisitely printed, they will do much to rehabilitate the good name of Lithography, by leading people to distinguish between the artistic and the commercial kind.

No greater contrast can be offered to the work we have just been considering than the lithographs and etchings of Hans Thoma. His tranquil, unpretentious art owes much to Leibl and that little-known master Victor Müller. It is redolent of the atmosphere of the beautiful Black Forest, where he was born

seventy-three years ago. One learns with surprise that he went to Paris in 1868, for Thoma is so characteristically German that one can hardly believe that he ever left the Fatherland. Yet he was the first German to discover Manet—for the special benefit of Leibl. His lithographs, many of which are symbolistic or religious, were inspired by a desire to bring genuine art within the reach of thin purses. His drawings, like the man, are powerful and clear, sincere and fine, and they possess high spiritual excellence quite apart from their artistic merit. The good old wrinkled farmers, and the scenes of their wholesome commonplace lives, the land in which fairy-tales flourished, and the poetry of rugged country life, are his favorite themes. Every contemporary artist who depicts German peasantry is influenced by his fine example, and all are inconceivable in any other country.

Fritz Böhle is, if possible, even more German than Thoma himself. Artistically speaking, he is a direct descendant of Dürer, and his lithographs of sturdy brewers, saints, and ploughmen with magnificent horses, are sculptural and monumental. He is, in fact, now at his home in Sachsenhausen, busy with plastic works on a colossal scale. The spirit and power of his pictures remind us of the distinguished Swiss artist Hodler, though technically there is hardly any point of similarity.

Thoma also influenced an interesting and significant group of men who abandoned their city studios and made their homes in Worpswede, a typically German village situated on the edge of the moors not far from Bremen. Fritz Mackensen discovered the artistic possibilities of the place in 1884, and in succeeding years he was joined by Otto Modersohn, Hans am Ende, Fritz Overbeck, and finally, in 1894, by Heinrich Vogeler. They enjoyed themselves hugely, worked in the open air, skated, sketched, and hunted, became sons of the soil, took an active part in the life about them, married, built homes, and lived simple lives. In 1895 their combined collected work created a mild sensation. Heinrich Vogeler, the youngest, most versatile, and most poetic, is now devoting practically all his time to Graphic Art, but his beautiful home, "Barkenhoff," is filled with examples of his work in all media, including several delightful tapestries and interesting pieces of furniture. We love him best, however, as the prolific etcher of wild flowers and trembling silver birches, German music and romance, childish myths, and as a

tasteful book-decorator with a deep love of nature and a pretty fantasy reminding us at times of Walter Crane. No spirit is so jaded that it will not respond to the blithe spirit of the lark which breathes through the mass of his work.

It is natural to find many men who are in some artistic way affiliated with those just mentioned, and one of them, Leopold, Graf von Kalckreuth, displays the characteristics of the best German artists. He shows sensitive portraits, idyllic landscapes, and figures which remind us of the Barbizon men. Here, too, we may speak of Paul Baum, who seems to us to be one of the most richly endowed, an etcher whose sympathies are with these quieter spirits, but whose technique, not unlike Signacs, is impressionistic. We find a beautiful rhythm in his line, fine balance in his composition, purity and sincerity in his feeling, a keen, refined vision combined with modern methods. The line particles, drawn on the divisionist principle, take the place of the impressionist color particles, and are intelligently varied. His talented pupil Erna Frank shows little of his technical influence in her sparkling lithographs of European capitals. There may also be grouped with these a host of gentle, smiling plates by such men as Hermann Struck, whose fine Jewish studies won favor with many distinguished collectors when his work was first shown, and who now adds some American scenes in which the right note has been happily caught; the interesting landscapes of Robert Scholtz; Cissarz' exquisite dry-points; Alexander Olbricht's fresh and original views of his neighbors' gardens in winter; and lastly the technically beautiful plates of Peter Halm, whose marvelous copies of old masters have overshadowed his power as an original artist.

Professor Max Liebermann is the last of the giants, and his famous motto, "Zeichnen ist Weglassen," is the watchword of the latest generation of artists. He is of the encouraging race of men that dares to think of progress on certain new lines even after a Michelangelo, Phidias, or Da Vinci passes away. His inimitable drawings have the energy and audacity of masterful youth, and in his latest paintings the character and impetuosity of the first studies are fortunately preserved; but there are still discriminating critics who prefer the drawings, lithographic studies, and etchings of boys bathing, Jewish ghettos, horse-races, polo games, and pig-sties to his final painted works. He, of course, adores Menzel; but Degas, whom the little German

HANS THOMA
SELF-PORTRAIT

master, strangely enough, could not understand, is his deity. Examples of both their works hang on the walls of Professor Liebermann's beautiful home on the shore of the Wannsee. He discovered Degas—who may have introduced him to the Japanese masters—about the year 1873, when he went to Paris shortly after the Franco-Prussian War. On his return, he transferred the artistic centre of Germany to Berlin, of which, according to Meier-Graefe, he is the symbol. Liebermann is simple and matter-of-fact, free from his early sentiment, concise to austerity, almost icy in his wit. Like our generation he moves so rapidly, that there is no time for a method like Menzel's. The little giant copied faithfully and minutely, leaving the artistic result more or less to chance. Liebermann never leaves anything to chance. Nature must yield to his temperament and conception, and, being a modern virtuoso, he prefers media which are delicate and swift. His pastels and lithographs achieve the fairy-like exquisiteness of Whistler and of our still unknown master, Robert Blum. He worships at the shrine of Degas the draughtsman, and not Manet the painter, and we can bestow no higher praise on him than by stating that his mastery is comparable to the Frenchman's. To-day he is recognized as Germany's national, conscious artistic tradition. The genius of all the younger artists seems to run in his direction, and there exists an army of brilliant German draughtsmen who can attack without fear or exertion problems which would strike terror to our sober American artists. Their strength often becomes unruly and chooses passionate themes which are too fervid for our conventions and tempered enthusiasm, but their sincerity compels our belief. A man like Max Slevogt puts us to shame by choosing as the source of inspiration for a vast series of lithographs our own James Fenimore Cooper's forgotten works. The pages glow with life and vigor and virility. Their charm of rapid execution and their fugitive manner, so admirably suited to the medium, are fascinating, and this foreigner has caught again and again the spirit of the work in a truly amazing fashion. Even the initials are noteworthy, and such a book, comparable in certain respects to Menzel's monumental "Frederick the Great," ought certainly to arouse our dormant creative energies. Slevogt has already produced etched work equally

brilliant, impressions which strike the essential note of any scene he chooses to depict. His work is printed at the "Pan Presse" in Berlin, a printing establishment in which all the men are artists. Reinhold Hoberg, the director, is himself an etcher and lithographer of more than ordinary ability. The press is still in its infancy, but already it is recognized as a worthy successor of the famous magazine "Pan," which was an effort to organize all branches of art. Lack of publicity, the costliness of the publication, disputes among its associates, and perhaps its intellectual programme and didactic aim, killed it. It is to be hoped that this new enterprise will receive more encouragement. Besides books containing lithographs by Max Beckman and Louis Corinth, earnest artists of wild inspiration and almost brutal masculine power, the press has produced a volume by Emil Pottner, in which the text and illustrations are all printed from stone. Other publications of exceptional interest, about to appear, are the graphic works of three great sculptors: Wilhelm Lehmbruck, whose etchings, like Rodin's, are masterly little revelations of his conception of form; Ernst Barlach, the wood-carver, who is like a powerful Gothic shade come to life; and August Gaul, an animal-sculptor who threatens to dethrone Barye. Recently the press issued a portfolio of etchings by Willi Geiger dealing with life in the bull-ring. This young artist, at one time a pupil of Franz von Stuck and Peter Halm, was not satisfied with making studies as an onlooker: he must needs become a matador and take part in the fight. His remarkable works, superb in their realism, were evidently done "right off the bat," yet the skill in placing upon the plate could hardly be improved upon. He has caught actions of a moment's duration like a magician. The works were carried out with such intensity that no apology need be offered for their creation, even after the existence of Goya's "Tauromachia." Geiger might be taken as a type of the most promising young German artist. He is only thirty-four years old, and already many portfolios of etchings and bookplates have issued from his studio. His studies with Professor Halm insured a firm foundation, but Geiger, like most other youthful revolutionists, began by claiming to be immune from affectation, convention, monotony, and morality. In their desire to impress themselves on the world as personalities, these fiery

young men shout until they are a trifle hoarse, refuse resolutely to tone down their passions, play pranks with their ability, insist to the point of fanaticism on themes with an erotic tinge, and finally quiet down to produce work of lasting value. Fortunately they remain delightfully undisciplined, attack every subject and medium, and constantly refuse to work in narrow fields. Hans Meid, a gifted man of rare temperament and curious technique, who has executed famous series of etched illustrations for Shakespeare's "Othello" and for "Don Juan"; Wilhelm Galhof, whose brilliant lithographs show woman unfortunately only in her debasement; and Max Mayrshofer, a wayward, promising draughtsman, are in this circle, which is very large.

A whole school of gifted artists have revived an interest in woodcuts. The delicious colors and attractive subjects ought certainly to interest our American connoisseurs. It is encouraging to note that they all recognize the limitations of the medium and confine themselves strictly to essentials. The method is Japanese, but the colors are modern, often borrowed from the palettes of Van Gogh and Gaugin. We may make especial note of Walter Klemm, an alluring artist whose subjects range from skating-rinks to birds and flowers; Emil Pottner, a specialist in entertaining philosophic farmyard studies; Arthur Illies and Heine Rath, whose obviously beautiful works exert an instantaneous appeal, being well drawn and glowing in color; Emil Orlik, some of whose prints will be mistaken for Oriental products, and who is even now sojourning among the Japanese; Gerhard Graf, a quiet, hidden worker, whose varied talents ought to win recognition; Martin Philipp, a many-sided artist whose complete works, we hope, will be collected and seen here; and Charlotte Rollius, a woman with a rare feeling for color and a charming sense of design. She is only one of many talented women, like Annie Löwenstein, a successful experimenter in colored etching, and Käthe Kollwitz, who have made splendid names for themselves as original artists. The last named deserves a monograph to herself. This charming, simple little gray lady lives with her husband, a physician, among the poor people of Berlin, and devotes her life to ministering to their wants. No one would suspect that these works were made by feminine hands. To find

a parallel we must read the tragedies of Hauptmann. Up in the North there is a remarkable painter, one Einar Nielsen, whose works breathe a similar spirit. The tragic pathos of sunless lives, their depressing sorrows and struggles with poverty, their cheerless homes, disease and death, are depicted with tremendous authority and loving sympathy. Among the cherished treasures of the great cabinet of engravings in the Berlin Museum is a complete set, in all states, of her really marvelous and poignant works. Men like Arthur Kampf, president of the Royal Academy of Art in Berlin, have worked in the same genre but hardly with equal—certainly with no greater—power.

Drawings quite antithetical to these are furnished by the great humorist weeklies, "Die Jugend" and "Simplizissimus," the contributors to which are also, as a rule, distinguished decorators of printed books. These men have mastered French methods of simplification, and have been students of Beardsley without losing their individuality. Marcus Behmer has just shown a representative collection of his curious etchings, drawings, and lithographs in New York. Justice can hardly be done to such men by showing a few examples of their work, for they are immensely versatile. Thomas Theodor Heine has made a name for himself in connection with the Hyperion Verlag in Munich, and also as a painter and as a sculptor, but he is still drawing occasionally for journals, and there is no goal which he may not reach. Olaf Gulbransson has been the witty star of "Simplizissimus" for so many years that few know he is a native of Christiania; and Emil Prectorius, who has also been with the Hyperion Verlag, is already claiming a unique place. Alastair's exotic women, amusing and technically strange, suggesting Beardsley in form and Bakst in color, and a satire on "Life and Death" by Georg Hermann Gelbke, may here be mentioned. All of these men know how to mix piquant French absinthe with their stein of Münchener.

From these it is natural to pass on to the latest phases of art—cubism, neo- and post-impressionism, futurism, expressionism, etc.—which seem to be fast gaining ground in all European countries. We shall be surprised to find that Lyonel Feininger, one of the most interesting men of this school, is a New-Yorker.

MAX KLINGER

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY PERSCHEID

He emigrated to Germany in 1887, began his career as a musician, and still plays Bach's organ preludes when he is not etching. In Paris, where he may be said to have found himself, he exhibited with the Independents, and he retains the wit and humor of his early weekly contributions to the "Chicago Tribune," which may still be remembered. His ancient engines have a curious human interest, but the weird perspective and primitive methods which remind us of Henri Rousseau and again of Picasso, will arouse a storm of criticism. Moriz Melzer, Max Pechstein, Artur Segal, Franz Marc, H. Richter-Berlin, Georg Tappert, and a host of others, belong to the German futurists who air their revolutionary doctrines in Walden's "Sturm" and that extraordinary magazine, "Der Blaue Reiter." They, too, are influenced by the French and Italian ultra-moderns, but some of their barbaric subjects and color harmonies are not extreme. They are ridding their works of "thought," and depend solely on line and color. Often their effects are produced by exaggeration, but Michelangelo and Daumier resorted to the same means. Pechstein's "Somalitanz," to single out an example, seems to us peculiarly felicitous and amusing. Kandinsky we frankly fail as yet to understand, but we hesitate to sneer, for a survey of these anarchistic works only impresses us with the freedom of art in our day. Germany is, after all, artistically a youthful country, full of vitality and promise, without centuries of cultivated tradition behind her, like France; and now that the doctrines of Severini and other Italian futurists are being accepted in the land of Chodowiecki and Rethel, no one can say whither the movement may lead. Merely to hurl shafts of cheap ridicule at new work is easy enough, but to prove conclusively that it is silly, or even grotesque, is not so simple. Art has been defined as exaggeration, as omission, or as self-expression. These passionate young aspirants, who seem capable of doing anything, argue cleverly and brilliantly that their art answers not one but all these requirements and definitions. They claim that they are hounded because they consistently avoid and despise prettiness. At any rate, they are enjoying themselves hugely, and perhaps these strange, enigmatic pastimes are preludes to great and unexpected developments. We are not sufficiently conservative to deny them their possibilities and privileges, for these reckless descendants

of Menzel have only just begun. Violent agitation and conflict with tradition cannot in the end result in much harm, and may do good. To make critics and public rail like madmen is in itself an achievement. It remains, however, to be seen whether, having rediscovered a few important principles, and having attracted attention, they can avoid the pitfalls of the usual danger, propagandism, and can bear in mind the principle of relativity of values. You cannot safely glorify Picasso and forget Ingres, or hail Van Gogh and ignore Leonardo.

MARTIN BIRNBAUM.

Thanks are due to Dr. Otto Michael of Berlin, through whose kindness this exhibition has been made possible.

## ARTISTS AND TITLES

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2 Lady with the Cane

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## COLLECTIONS NOW INSTALLED IN THE ART MUSEUM

### CURRENT SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS


**Exhibition of Contemporary German Graphic Art**, galleries 25, 26, 30 and ..... 31


### OTHER INSTALLATIONS


Paintings lent by Mr. George B. Leighton..... gallery 14

Paintings belonging to the W. K. Bixby American Art Acquisition Foundation.....gallery 15

Other paintings, in.....galleries 16, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19, 23 and 28

Drawings and sketches .....galleries 4, 5 and 9

Etchings by Joseph Pennell, N. A .....gallery 27

Arundel prints, of masterpieces of painting.....gallery 1

Greek Sculpture.....galleries 17 and 24

Roman and Renaissance sculpture..... gallery 8
and northwest alcove of central sculpture hall.

Modern sculpture, principally installed in the central sculpture hall

Antique and classic bronzes, installed decoratively in various galleries

Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities, including sculpture..... gallery 21

Medallions in cases.....gallery 1

Japanese and Chinese Art, chiefly in.....galleries 10 and 11
also .....galleries 13 and 1

Metal work, chiefly in .....gallery 29
also .....galleries 15 and 1

Pottery, etc., chiefly in.....gallery 13

Glass .....galleries 13 and 20
also.....galleries 21, 23, 20, 1, 6, 7, etc.

St. Elizabeth Mosaics, presented by Mr. Adolphus Busch, 1905.....central sculpture hall

Fabrics, etc., chiefly in .....galleries 29 and 10
also in Indian and other collections.

American Indian Handiwork—
The Dyer Collection .....galleries 5, 4 and 9
The Andrews Collection and other exhibits.....galleries 6 and 7

Central American Antiquities (Expedition of the St. Louis Society of the Archaeological Institute of America)....gallery 12

Architectural models, etc.....galleries 17 and 8
and central sculpture hall



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